

West Virginia State Parks Foundation

Minutes of the 2011 Annual Meeting

April 18, 2011

The meeting convened at Stonewall Resort State Park in Roanoke, West Virginia at 10:40 am. President Jim Michael welcomed park and foundation representatives and made introductions.

Secretary's report: Bob Hoke presented the minutes from the 2010 meeting in written form. Jim Michael asked for any corrections. Mark Abbott **moved to accept the minutes as presented.** Dan Hopkins seconded and the motion was approved.

Hoke said that the bylaws amendment to add two voting members to the Board was approved by six of the 10 member foundations in October, 2010. The new members will be appointed by the Chief of DNR with the approval of the Governor.

Treasurer's report: Bob Hoke presented the 2010 financial report in written form. He noted that the only significant financial activity in 2010 was \$1,390 spent for playground equipment at Blackwater Falls and \$163 spent for shooting range improvements at the Greenbrier State Forest. Both projects were funded by donations at the parks. Dan Hopkins **moved to accept the financial report.** Mark Abbott seconded and the motion was approved.

Hoke then discussed 2011 financial activity to date. He said that \$2,210 was spent for disc golf course targets for the Greenbrier State Forest and that the Foundation has received a \$166K bequest from the estate of Kenneth Cashdollar for "maintenance, construction, and improvements of hiking trails, overlooks, and nature centers. Preference for Blackwater Falls, Twin Falls, or Tygart Lake State Parks." Park Superintendents and DNR will decide on projects to be done.

Parks report: Clisby Jennell made the following comments about the state of the Park system:

- The Park system is receiving \$52M in bond money. About \$32M is to be used for the new lodge at Canaan and that project is moving quickly. Other parks will get money for numerous infrastructure improvements such as dam maintenance, water system upgrades, pool improvements, and lodge upgrades.
- Potential candidates for the two new at-large Board members have been selected by the Chief of the DNR, but approval by the Governor is on hold due to the upcoming election.

- Selection of a DNR employee to be the liaison with the WVSPF is still under discussion. A potential person has been contacted, but no decision has been made. Jim Michael noted that naming that person is an important task.
- Someone asked about the status of the \$7,500 matching grants for foundations. Clisby said that the grants are available but that the procedures may have changed slightly from previous years. Vicky Casto in the Parks office has the details.
- The requirements for TEA-21 grants have changed recently. DNR now must encumber the full amount of the grant up front and then be repaid as the grant money comes in.

America's State Parks Foundation: Jim Michael said he had been contacted by someone from the Pennsylvania State Parks Foundation and was asked whether the WVSPF would be interested in joining a new national organization of state park foundations. There is an organizational meeting planned in South Dakotas this fall (in conjunction with the meeting of the association of state park directors). There was general agreement that the national organization could be worthwhile, but Bob Hoke said there is no funds to send someone to the South Dakota meeting. Dan Hopkins said he would try to raise funds to send someone, probably Jim Michael, to the meeting.

Checklist for park visits: Dan Hopkins suggested that there be a card that park visitors can get stamped as the visit the State's park. Clisby Jannelle said that is what the VIPP program already does and that the program is quite popular.

Featured Speaker: Sam England introduced Johnny Finch, President of the Virginia Foundation for Parks (VAFP). Johnny gave an excellent presentation on the VAFP, including the following points:

- It is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) umbrella group that supports Virginia's parks and supports "friends" groups for individual parks.
- They host semi-annual conferences at different parks. These are multi-day events that usually include an informal dinner on Thursday evening, park tours on Friday, a more formal dinner on Friday evening, a business meeting on Saturday morning, and an Executive Committee meeting on Saturday afternoon.

- They try to raise funds for parks at all levels in the state. They have been quite successful in educating the legislature to at least partially restore park system funds that were reduced during the recession. They are also trying to get better funding for operations and maintenance, not just new projects.
- There are now 25 “friends” groups in the parks and 6,800 volunteers put in over 256,000 volunteer hours in 2010.
- They are in the process of installing computer kiosks in many parks that allow visitors to easily get information on various aspects of the park. This has reduced the routine workload on rangers and allows them to provide better assistance to visitors with questions. The Foundation hopes to further increase the use of technology for visitor support in the parks.
- They also have an Web site, www.virginiaoutdoors.com, that contains the same information that is in the kiosks. The site will soon feature ads and this will be a significant revenue source.
- They have no dedicated funding stream, but they actively solicit individual members at various levels. The “associate” membership class is free. The VAPF’s web site www.virginiaparks.org, is a significant source of new members. They expect Web site ad revenue and grants to become increasingly important funding sources in the future.

Foundation Reports:

Cacapon: The Foundation has a major fund raiser each year and this year they had over 1,000 attendees. They also have a Spring Gala that raised about \$3.5K. They are trying to get a \$100K grant for lodge restoration and improvements.

Camp Creek: The new amphitheater is almost finished. | Bluegrass and other music events are good fundraising events. Playground equipment has been replaced and a new gazebo is to be built soon.

Holly River: The Foundation received a national award for a trail they constructed. A new map showing all the trails in the park has been printed. Permanent blazes have replaced painted blazes on most trails. The aging coin operated washing machines have been replaced and new tools have been purchased for Park maintenance personnel.

Little Beaver: the Foundation is going to bring in several music groups for fundraising.

MSR&LHA (Cass): Volunteer work on restoring one of the park’s steam locomotives continues, the Association funded a new roof for the historic Cass Community Center, the Association continues to provide historic interpreters during the operating season, and the annual Cass Railfan Weekend was a success.

North Bend State Park Foundation: The Foundation has raised about \$25K, extended a paved trail by 300 feet and built an observation deck, assisted in landscaping in front of the lodge, purchased new playground equipment, and they have several projects planned for 2011.

North Bend Rails to Trails Foundation: The Foundation has received a \$100K Federal grant for trail work. A tunnel is being refurbished for safety and esthetic reasons. They have a grant to fix up the Foundation’s office to look like a 1930s bank and they will be selling things there. They upgraded their Web site. They received a \$6K donation to purchase a large lawn mower for the Park and they got a \$22K grant to resurface three miles of damaged trail.

Pricketts Fort: Their operating season opens soon and they have a full schedule of events planned, including lots of visits from school groups. They have implemented a major outreach program to go to schools that can’t visit the park. Adult workshops are scheduled throughout the year. There is lots of ongoing infrastructure work, especially on the amphitheater.

Stonewall Jackson: The Foundation is relatively new, but with Superintendent Sam England’s help they have received several grants and work on the projects should start soon. One big goal is to provide alternatives so visitors won’t have to walk along the park roads.

Tygart Lake: Sue Coole reported that the Foundation seems to be declining due to actions by the new Park management. The nature center has been phased out and this made many volunteers unhappy. A project to build an ADA trail was recently scrapped and this has caused a drop in public support. The recent Spring Hop fell short of its fundraising goal. The Foundation plans to run electric service to the picnic/playground area.

Valley Falls: The Foundation has been restarted with some very enthusiastic new Board members.

Election: Melissa May, Stan Anderson, and Mark Abbott were on the Nominating Committee. All the current officers are willing to run again, but Bob Hoke said he would like to be replaced as Secretary next year. Jim Michael asked for nominations from

the floor, but there were none. There was a motion to accept the proposed slate of officers by acclimation. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The officers are:

President: Jim Michael
 Vice President: Dan Hopkins
 Secretary: Bob Hoke
 Treasurer: Bob Hoke

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Robert B. Hoke

Robert B. Hoke, Secretary

Meeting Attendees:

James Michael	Cacapon
Robert Hoke	MSR&LHA (Cass)
Jeremy Cross	Hawks Nest
Dan Hopkins	Little Beaver
Buddy Myers	Valley Falls
Ron Fawcett	Valley Falls
Tom Ambrose	Cacapon (Supt.)
Johnny Finch	Virginia Association for Parks
Jo Finch	Virginia Association for Parks
Mick Elsey	Tygart Lake St. Pk. Foundation
Bob Costo	Tygart Lake St. Pk. Foundation
Sue Coole	Tygart Lake St. Pk. Foundation
Mark Abbott	North Bend Rails to Trails Found.
Kathy Abbott	North Bend Rails to Trails Found.
Lin Dunham	Cacapon
Melissa May	Pricketts Fort Memorial Found.
Steve Ludwig	Stonewall State Park Foundation
Donna Boggs	Holly River State Park Foundation
Stanley Anderson	Holly River State Park Foundation
Teresa Hatfield	Camp Creek State Park
Ted Hatfield	Camp Creek State Park
Clisby Jennell	WV State Parks Business Manager
Matthew Baker	Coopers Rock State Forest
Sam England	Stonewall Resort State Park